

**Statement of
The Honorable Jeffrey N. Shane
Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy
United States Department of Transportation
Before the
Committee on Government Reform
United States House of Representatives
Field Hearing on BRAC's Impact on Traffic Congestion and Quality of Life in
Northern Virginia
August 31, 2006**

Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure today to represent Acting Secretary Maria Cino and the Department of Transportation to discuss with you the potential impacts on traffic congestion in our region that may result from implementation of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission report requirements.

Introduction

According to the BRAC Commission, 31 Department of Defense (DoD) installations in the Commonwealth of Virginia will realign. As a result, we believe several local installations will experience significant transportation impacts, including: Fort Belvoir, the U.S. Marine Corps Base at Quantico, and Fort Lee in Petersburg.

Approximately 22,000 Federal jobs will be moving to Fort Belvoir. According to the Army, the preferred land use plan locates 18,000 of those jobs at the Engineer Proving Ground area, which is in the northwest quadrant of the I-95 and Fairfax County Parkway interchange. The remaining jobs will be in areas of Fort Belvoir south of U.S. 1.

In addition, the Federal work force will be increased at the U.S. Marine Corps Base at Quantico (preliminary estimate of 3,000 government employees). BRAC actions will also increase the Federal workforce at Fort Lee by an estimated 7,300 employees.

Government officials also expect a substantial number of off-installation support and retail jobs to be created at Fort Belvoir, at Quantico, and at Fort Lee.

The Virginia Division Office of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has been following the Defense Department's plan very closely to determine the BRAC impacts on current and planned transportation projects.

Coordination with Army Officials

A working group, with members from the Army, Virginia Department of Transportation Northern Virginia District, Fairfax County, FHWA Federal Lands Highway Division, and a number of consultants working with DoD, has been established to review the transportation impacts of the Fort Belvoir expansion.

The Master Plan for the Fort Belvoir development, including the Environmental Impact Statement, will not be finished until the summer of 2007; however, the working group is reviewing a desired concept and has developed a preliminary list of transportation improvement projects for the region. Post, Buckley, Schuh & Jernigan, Inc. (PBS&J) and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP are responsible for master planning, design, engineering and program integration of the Fort Belvoir realignment.

Virginia Transportation Projects Linked to BRAC

There are several projects underway in the Northern Virginia metropolitan areas linked to the BRAC plans:

Richmond Highway - Telegraph Road Connector

FHWA's Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD) is conducting the planning and environmental work for the proposed Richmond Highway-Telegraph Road Connector and administering the project through the Department of Army (DA) Defense Access Road Program. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and Fairfax County are assisting in the study and design development.

Though not directly BRAC-related, this project would restore much-needed capacity between Richmond Highway (U.S. Route 1) and Telegraph Road (VA Route 611) across Fort Belvoir. DoD restricted public access to Beulah Road and Woodlawn Road (within Fort Belvoir) following the events of September 11, 2001. These roads linked U.S. Route 1 and Telegraph Road. DoD is committed to funding two travel lanes, with the project being designed to ultimately include a four-lane roadway. Based upon anticipated funding the project is being planned in phases: 1) the two-lane connection, 2) the four-lane connection with intersection improvements at the termini, and 3) Telegraph Road improvements at the northern termini to complete the four-lane connection between Beulah and Franconia Road.

Increased traffic associated with the BRAC only amplifies the need to complete all phases of this project. VDOT is currently looking at BRAC-related traffic impacts along U.S. 1 and I-95 in this area.

Fairfax County Parkway

The final planned section of the Fairfax County Parkway is seen as a key entrance to the Engineer Proving Ground area where it is understood that a majority of the BRAC relocations will be placed. The required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies have been completed by FHWA and VDOT, but old ordnance and other contamination from a two-mile stretch of highway that runs through the Engineer Proving Ground at Fort Belvoir must be removed prior to commencing construction. Negotiations between DoD and VDOT concerning this removal are ongoing.

Quantico and Petersburg Areas

BRAC impacts are not seen to be as extreme in Quantico. DoD anticipates adding only 3,000 jobs here, but any increase is of concern in this already congested I-95 corridor. The Fredericksburg metropolitan planning organization (MPO) recently passed a resolution to study the need for a new interchange at Telegraph Road just south of the Prince William/Stafford County line. This study has not yet begun.

FHWA Virginia Division Office Actions

The FHWA Virginia Division will continue to follow the BRAC plans and staff has been assigned to work proactively in the following areas:

- Ensure transportation issues including impacts on highway safety are considered in any Environmental Documents for BRAC installations.
- Consider BRAC in the Interstate 95/395 HOT Lanes Project.
- Determine impacts at the Interstate interchange leading to the U.S. Marine Corps Base at Quantico.
- Ensure BRAC issues are considered in the regional planning process.
- Coordinate meetings between BRAC officials and members of the VDOT and FHWA Virginia Division leadership team.
- Track current and planned projects associated with BRAC, such as the Fairfax County Parkway project, and provide technical assistance to VDOT or the military as requested.

Federal Transit Administration

The Department is pursuing a multi-model approach to addressing BRAC impacts. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will work with FHWA to coordinate transportation services that will be needed as a result of any BRAC relocations within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

FTA will assist the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and local transportation providers to coordinate future transit service enhancements and expansions to serve the growing transit market resulting from the BRAC relocations.

As the master plan becomes more fully developed, local transit agencies including the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Fairfax Connector, Alexandria Dash, the Virginia Railway Express, and other transportation providers will participate in the planning process to identify potential new transit services.

FTA encourages local agencies to implement transit supportive site design for the proposed new construction, and identify opportunities for transit oriented development that will increase accessibility to transit services.

National Congestion Initiative

Any potential increase in traffic congestion that could result from the BRAC realignment will remain a major area of concern for the Department. Congestion is one of the most prominent threats to the continued effectiveness of our highway system and, in many ways, our quality of life. In many respects, the nation's transportation system has become the victim of its own success. Our growing economy and standard of living have created a demand for travel and movement of goods that is increasingly difficult to meet. We know that reducing traffic congestion is crucial for Northern Virginia, for the entire Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and across the country, because congestion wastes fuel, wastes time, and robs the economy of productivity. Congestion costs Americans an estimated \$200 billion a year. Consumers lose 3.7 billion hours and waste 2.3 billion gallons of fuel sitting in traffic jams.

With these facts in mind, Secretary Mineta announced in May the Bush Administration's "National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network"--a national congestion relief initiative. The Congestion Initiative provides a clear plan for Federal, State, and local officials to follow as we work together to maximize the valuable tools Congress provided in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) for improving

operation of our surface transportation system, encouraging the development and deployment of new technologies and construction methods, and expanding opportunities for private investment in transportation infrastructure.

A significant part of the Congestion Initiative focuses on our largest metropolitan areas, including the Washington area. We will seek Urban Partnership Agreements with areas that offer the most promising results in, for example, traffic affected, lessons learned, and models for other regions. These agreements will embrace several proven, effective strategies, including variable priced tolling programs designed to spread traffic flows throughout the day to get more out of existing highways, additional express bus and bus rapid transit service that take advantage of the free-flow conditions generated by variable pricing, and expanded use of telecommuting and flexible work schedules by major regional employers.

The Congestion Initiative will also encourage States to pass legislation giving the private sector a broader opportunity to invest in transportation. Virginia has been a leader in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) enabling legislation, passing a Public-Private Transportation Act in 1995. The Virginia legislation takes one of the more comprehensive approaches to enabling PPPs.

The application of advanced technology or Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) is critical to improving productivity of our existing transportation assets. The Congestion Initiative calls for widespread deployment of new operational technologies and practices that can unblock chokepoints. One example is the establishment of a national 3-digit telephone number for traveler information, 5-1-1, which gives callers information about local road and traffic conditions by dialing an easy-to-remember number, and our current efforts to promote the deployment of 5-1-1 services. As a result of these efforts, we expect 5-1-1 service to be available to half the nation by the end of this year. Services like 5-1-1 give motorists the information they need to make better choices about the routes they take, helping them save time by avoiding traffic tie-ups. The 5-1-1 service has been available Statewide in Virginia since February 2005. In addition, there is an emerging, vibrant private market sector devoted to packaging and distributing real time traffic information to travelers in major metropolitan areas across the country. We expect the efforts of these companies, including PPPs, to improve the traveler information experience for daily travelers.

The Department will also accelerate the development of three to five multi-State, multi-use transportation corridors that have the greatest potential to relieve traffic congestion based on current and projected growth. We will work with the States on new financing models for multi-State projects. We are also assisting the States in implementing SAFETEA-LU provisions directed at improving materials, contracting, and construction techniques for Federal-aid highways.

At the Department, we expect every part of the Congestion Initiative that isn't already underway will be underway before the end of the year. We have the tools, the technology, the plan, and the commitment to reduce congestion both in this region and across the country.

Conclusion

The Department is fully engaged with Federal, State and local officials to collect and analyze the data necessary to assess impacts on transportation from the BRAC

realignments. We will continue to work closely with the appropriate officials to implement timely and effective responses to these impacts. Our efforts, I can assure you, will involve a multi-modal approach.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the Department's actions in response to the BRAC recommendations. I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.